

## CONFERENCE TO AVERT STRIKE.

Leaders of Dissatisfied Employees Gather in Mr. Harriman's Office to Discuss Points of Difference.

20,000 MEN ARE INVOLVED.

Four Great Western Railway Systems Will Be Disorganized if a Common Ground of Agreement Be Not Speedily Reached.

A conference is being held to-day at the office of Edward H. Harriman, No. 120 Broadway, which will determine whether the union workmen of the four great railways controlled by him are to go on strike Jan. 3 or whether existing differences shall be patched up.

Primarily the conference is being held to effect a settlement between the machinists of the Union Pacific, who have been on strike since June last, and President Burt, the newly-elected head of the system.

It was bluntly announced, however, by the union sending men to the conference that a failure to compromise will be followed by a strike of all the union boiler-makers, machinists and blacksmiths in the employ of the Southern Pacific, the Union Pacific, Oregon Short Line and the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company.

This means that from 15,000 to 20,000 railroad employees will be thrown out of employment and the service of the four railway systems completely disorganized unless the railroad magnate mollifies his men at the conference now going on.

Those at the Conference.

Mr. Harriman, who is President of the Southern Pacific, chairman of the Union Pacific and dominant factor in the other two companies, had with him to-day President Horace G. Burt, of the Union Pacific, and a number of the directors. The unions were represented by John McNeill, President of the Boiler-Makers' Union, and two associates; James O'Connell, President of the Machinists' Union, and T. L. Wilson, and two associates, of the Blacksmiths' Union. They came from Omaha at the request of Mr. Harriman and are determined that their principal demands shall be met. These are:

1. Reinstating President Burt's order to introduce the piece-work system in all the Union Pacific shops, which caused the original strike.

2. An increase of 10 per cent. in the pay of union workmen on all the Harriman lines.

3. The discharge of every non-union man in the shops and assurances that the union leaders shall be protected.

At Mr. Harriman's office ignorance of the conference was professed. Mr. Harriman, before he entered, said: "There may be a meeting of gentlemen interested in the Union Pacific, but it cannot be called a conference. I don't know whether there will be anything of public interest."

The strike which has resulted in to-day's conference was inaugurated June 17, when President Burt attempted to introduce piece work in all the Union Pacific shops. A delegation of machinists called on him to talk the matter over, and when they returned to their shops they were notified of their dismissal.

After two weeks a strike was declared and 1,400 shopmen walked out. The company immediately began importing men from the East, but the strikers picketed the shops and succeeded in persuading the strike-breakers to desert the company.

The company made desperate efforts to lead off the picketers. A court injunction was secured but dismissed. Then stockades were built and boarding-houses established in the shops and imported men kept within the inclosure, but the strikers managed to get to them and wear them down. Then and there the company's men were working in the Omaha shops three weeks ago. To-day there are hardly more than a hundred.

Locomotive Loan Stopped.

The union men said that President Burt was bent on a loan of locomotives to the Union Pacific, and that the other Harriman roads, and became a fight for life with the union men. Then and there the conference on all the Harriman roads preferred their demands.

Meanwhile the road suffered greatly through the lack of competent machinists. Locomotives got out of order, and many accidents and delays occurred. Fourteen new locomotives, which had been built for the Southern Pacific, were returned over to the Union Pacific with the lettering.

Notice was served on the Southern Pacific that it would have a strike on its hands, and the loan of locomotives stopped. The Milwaukee road got a similar notice three weeks ago, when it sent a locomotive to the Union Pacific's overland limited. The locomotive was recalled within twenty-four hours.

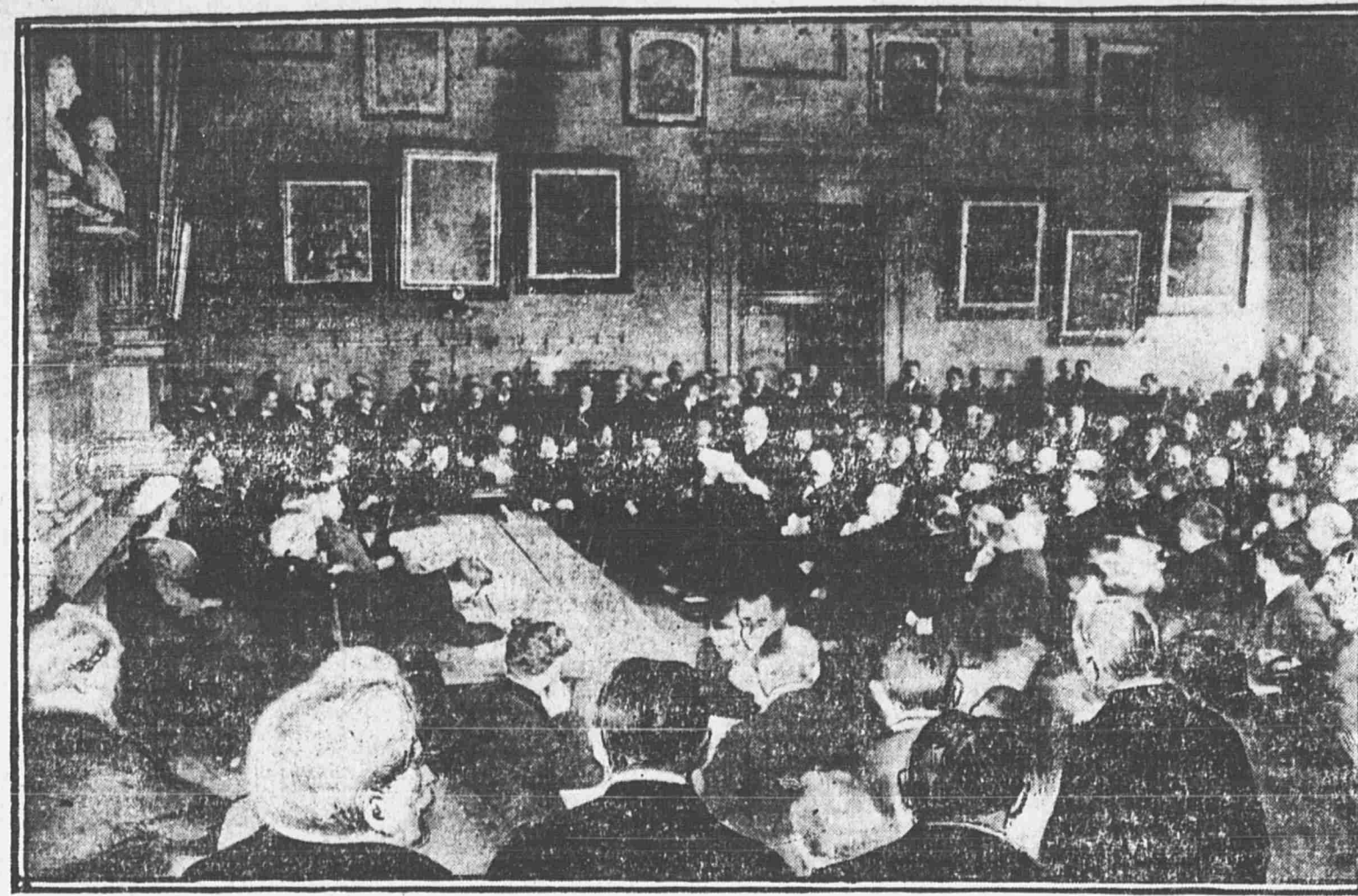
## PERHAPS SOUGHT DEATH TOGETHER.

Man and Woman Overcome by Gas in Hotel Room—Former Dies but Latter May Recover.

It is believed that suicide was the intention of a man and woman who engaged a room in the Astor Place Hotel, at 24th street and Third avenue, last night, and who were discovered in a room filled with gas this afternoon. The man, who is believed to have been Harry I. St. Clair, fifty-five years old, a special policeman, died before the arrival of an ambulance. A card which was found in the room leads the police to believe that the woman was Gustie West, of No. 46 West Thirtieth street. She is about twenty-eight years old. She was taken to Bellevue Hospital and a doctor said she will recover. She is held as a prisoner.

In the clothing of the man were found a revolver and a "bully." The card on which the name was found bore a woman's handwriting. All the doors and windows were closed and the room was full of gas, which escaped from two

## CITIZENS OF BROOKLYN PROTESTING BEFORE THE STATE RAILROAD COMMISSIONERS AGAINST WRETCHED CAR SERVICE.



(Continued from First Page.)

speaker. He said that he did not concur in the intemperate criticism which has been displayed against the Railroad Commission. He said that the situation in Brooklyn was unbearable.

"Women and children are trampled upon and shamefully treated. Franchises are regarded as very valuable all over the country, and in return the people demand reasonable and proper facilities. It is impossible to present the case of the people in a day, or a week, or a month. There is a general disregard of comfort or safety of the people. The equipment is good, but there are not enough cars."

### INTOLERABLE CONDITIONS PREVAIL.

Mr. Steele was followed by Abner S. Haight, President of the Citizens' Union. Mr. Haight said that the railroad facilities in Brooklyn were never as lax as now. He said: "No matter how many bridges or tunnels may be built in the next twenty years, the situation will be as intolerable."

"We insist that cars enough shall be run during the non-rush hours to provide seats. We insist that cars shall be run during the evening, enough to provide people with seats. It is an infringement on our rights as citizens that mail cars and express cars and other cars of that sort are run during the rush hours. The method of running this road seems to me a maximum of business and a minimum of comfort for the traveler. We appeal here, and failing, we must go to the Legislature. Failing there, the people must take the matter into their own hands by means of municipal ownership. Half fare only should be charged to people standing during rush hours."

Mr. Haight concluded by appealing to the Railroad Commission to exercise all its powers in finding a remedy.

Charles A. Corwin and John L. Wells appeared as counsel for the Brooklyn Rapid Transit. Mr. Corwin said that the Brooklyn Rapid Transit was doing all in its power to provide proper transit.

### HERE ARE SOME JAMMED CARS.

A gentleman in the back of the hall said he came down in a car this morning which registered 92 passengers. "I beat you," said Chairman Cole. "The car I came down on this morning at 9:45 carried 103 passengers."

"I rode on one that carried 127," shouted another Brooklynite.

The seating capacity of the average car is about 60 passengers.

Chairman Cole then requested Judge Abraham F. Dailey, as counsel for the complainants, to put his witnesses on the stand and get down to business in a systematic way. Judge Dailey called Benjamin F. Lair, a lawyer, living at No. 195 Greene avenue. Mr. Lair complained bitterly of cars full of passengers that passed by on the Greene avenue line without making stops.

"Even on Sundays the cars are so crowded that seats cannot be secured," he said. "I have taken a Fifth avenue car in Manhattan when passengers were standing. These cars crawl along Fulton street, through the shopping district, where women were crowded on until there was not room for another passenger."

### CROWDED WORSE THAN CATTLE.

Charles M. Chadwick, Chairman of the Committee of Fifty, living at No. 682 Willsborough avenue, testified to his experience. He said people were crowded into cars worse than cattle. He had been frequently carried past his station. He had been thrown by the sudden starting and stopping of cars. Marcy avenue cars were always jammed.

"I think if the 'L' road trains were doubled much relief would follow. Much of the crush on the surface roads would be relieved. I believe it is within the power of the Brooklyn Rapid Transit to furnish better facilities during non-rush hours from this minute."

E. M. Roberts, manufacturer, living at No. 594 Jefferson avenue, followed Mr. Chadwick in the witness chair. He complained of the transfer system, which forced the rush all in one direction. Especially was this true of the Nostrand avenue line.

"What has been your experience as to heat on the cars?" was asked.

"I don't know what heat is on the cars. I think they could make ice in most of them," he replied.

Ludwig Nissen, manufacturer, living at No. 1297 Dean street, was the next witness. He said that on the Kings County Elevated Road he had frequently to wait ten minutes for a train between 7 and 8 o'clock in the evening.

### WHAT THE WOMEN SUFFER.

Mr. Nissen recommended the extension of the rush-hour service. "The conditions prevailing at present are absolutely immoral so far as women are concerned. You should see the children and women jammed in a crowd for five or six minutes under conditions that are shameful."

"No one has had a more annoying experience than my own wife," put in Chairman Cole.

Dr. George W. Brush, of No. 462 Ocean avenue, testified to his experiences on the Flatbush and Kings County lines. He said it was very seldom that he could secure a seat even in the rush hours.

James L. Du Bois, of Bath Beach, told of the jamming and crowding of the Bay Ridge and Bath Beach lines. Mr. Du Bois complained that no flagmen were employed on the Bath Beach road and that life was in constant danger where the electric trains are being operated. There were no stations and those that were erected by private subscription are not cared for by the road. They are filthy as pig pens. The trains are jammed at rush hours.

### M'CARROLL A GOOD WITNESS.

President McCarroll, of the Manufacturers' Association, who lives at No. 754 St. Mark's avenue, was the next witness. He said:

"The great difficulty is that not enough trains are run on the 'L' line to receive passengers discharged from the bridge trains. Bridge trains run at the rate of one every fifty-five seconds, but the 'L' trains run at intervals of 4 or 5 minutes. The result is obvious. The railroad people claim they have not proper switching facilities. There is no reason why they should not have these facilities. There is plenty of property at the terminal which they can buy."

"Regarding the surface lines, the congestion of Fulton street could be relieved by diverting traffic to Atlantic avenue."

"At the Dean street station of the Brighton Beach line there are no attendants, no lights and it is dangerous to life and limb. Besides, a man might be waylaid and assaulted and no one be the wiser."

"Regarding heat, we are told that they have not power enough to furnish light and heat and power during the rush hours. I think they can get it if they want it."

"Where?" echoed President Greatainger and Lawyer Wells, "we would like to know."

"I will be in a position to state where in the near future," was the answer.

"If we ran cars so that every one should be provided with seats, is it not a fact that half the cars would be running with seats only half filled?" asked Mr. Wells.

"That is a condition which no Brooklynite ever expects to realize," was the reply.

The crowd laughed.

Mr. Wells frowned and said he did not believe this was a humorous proceeding.

"I was never more serious in my life," replied Mr. McCarroll.

"You say cars are always crowded. Have you ever tried waiting for the next car?" asked Mr. Wells.

"No, indeed, for you never know in Brooklyn when the next car comes along."

Mr. Wells soon gave Mr. McCarroll up as a bad job and he stopped questioning him.

### GUARD WORKS FOURTEEN HOURS A DAY.

President Papst, of the Ocean Hill Board of Trade, a butcher, living at No. 61 Sohier street, told of the evils of travel on the Kings County "L" road.

"On the train this morning," he said, "I asked a guard why he was not particular about calling out stations. 'If you had to stand on this platform for fourteen hours a day for \$1.75 I guess you'd get a bit careless, too,' the guard said."

"What was the man's name?" asked Lawyer Collins.

"No, no, no," protested the spectators, "don't give the name."

Mr. Collins blushed. He said he merely wished to know because the guard was lying. "No man works fourteen hours a day on that line," he said.

Mr. Papst said the railroad facilities were so poor that rents have been lowered and property greatly depreciated.

Chairman Cole said it was bad for Brooklynites to proclaim this state of affairs from the housetop because Jersey real estate speculators were ready to take advantage of the situation.

"What are we to do?" asked Judge Dailey. "Sit still and cover these things up?"

### HE NEVER GETS A SEAT.

Charles J. Edwards, of No. 399A Grand avenue, said that he never had been able to even stand comfortably on the cars during the rush hours, and suggested the putting on of more cars as a means of relief.

Adolph Kindeh, a lawyer, graphically described the horrors of the transfer system at the loop in East New York.

### B. R. T. RUN BY STOCK SHAVERS, SAYS GROUT.

Comptroller Grout said to-day, "The Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company is managed by a crowd of stock shavers. Public convenience is sacrificed to dividends. The system is run for the benefit of the men who gamble in its stocks. I have learned that at times men are discharged in scores and fewer cars are run. In order to reduce operating expenses the number of cars is cut down. The result is to crowd the remaining ones to overflowing, thus increasing the revenue derived from each car, entailing greater work upon the conductor and motorman, with less cost to the company. In addition, the electric power is reduced and an additional saving effected."

"The result of all this is that expenses diminish and the company's stock goes up after the stock shavers have received the tip to buy. When it is again determined to effect a change for the better, the stock shavers are informed that the expenses are to be increased. Then the stock sustains a slump, but the wise stock operators have again made money."

"The physical system itself at present is an outrage against public decency, and there is urgent and immediate demand for reform."

## HUGE SUM STOLEN FROM AMERICAN. 125 MEN ADDED TO POLICE FORCE.

Two Men Arrested in London for Having Another Man's Letter of Credit for \$25,000.

LONDON, Dec. 28.—Two Russians, Pinkovitz and Green, claiming to be naturalized Americans, have been arrested in London charged with being in illegal possession of a letter of credit for \$25,000 lost on the Continent by M. Greenbaum. Some of M. Greenbaum's cards were also found on the men arrested. They bear the address: "Hurst Club, San Francisco." About \$17,575 of the sum represented by the letter of credit remained unclaimed.

M. Greenbaum lost his pocketbook at Baden-Baden June 24. It contained \$35 besides the letter of credit.

### ICE-BOUND FERRYBOAT FREE

Brave Capt. Lyon Is Cheered by the People of Nyack.

(Special to The Evening World.)

NYACK, N. Y., Dec. 28.—The ferryboat Rockland, which had been fast in the ice off Tarrytown since Saturday morning, was released this morning by a Yankee tugboat and reached Nyack at 10 o'clock. Capt. Lyon and his brave crew received an ovation from Nyack people.

Fractured Her Skull and Died.

Imogen Tracy, fifty-five years old, who a few days ago fell down a flight of stairs at her home, No. 27 West 121st street, and fractured her skull, died to-day in Roosevelt Hospital as the result of her injuries.

## 125 MEN ADDED TO POLICE FORCE.

Flanagan and McGrath, Noted Athletes, Among the New Wearers of the Blue.

Police Commissioner Partridge appointed 125 new policemen to-day. It was said at Police Headquarters that he would appoint a number of detectives-segments before his resignation takes effect New Year's Day.

Among the new policemen are "Mattie" McGrath and his friend, John Flanagan, the champion hammer thrower. Both are well-known athletes. As they walked in the line arm-in-arm to the room to be sworn in Commissioner Partridge and Deputy Piper observed them.

"There's a fine pair of men," remarked the retiring Commissioner.

The 125 men were taken from the top of the list of eligibles prepared by the Civil-Service Commission. The men were ordered before the Board of Police Surgeons for physical examination and were then sent to the School of Police Instruction. From there they will be assigned to various precincts for duty.

### VANDERBILT IS BETTER.

Report from Sick Room Says Millionaire Is Stronger.

The condition of Cornelius Vanderbilt was more encouraging this morning. At his home, No. 25 Park avenue, it was said at 7 o'clock this morning that reports from the sick room were that he had passed a fair night and was stronger.

## JUDGE PAROLES BOY POCKET

Meyer Cohen, Aged Twelve, Tells How He Robbed Women on the Street of Their Jewelry and Chain Purses.

### SHOPPING BAGS ARE EASY.

Plunder Not Hard to Get, He Declares, but He Never Dared Go to His Father's House with Proceeds of His Theft.

Meyer Cohen, the twelve-year-old boy who last Tuesday gave an example in the Children's Court of his adroitness at picking pockets, was paroled to-day by Justice Mayer. The boy thief must report each week to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and his parents must move from their present home, at No. 36 Monroe street, to another part of the city.

Benjamin Cohen, the boy's father, his mother and his elder brother were in court to-day. They were represented by Lawyer Charles F. Howe, who told Justice Mayer that the family was eminently respectable and had never before had any trouble. The father was found to be an honest man and the brother regularly employed and honest.

Known as "Kiddie Cohen."

Meyer Cohen was again called up before the Justice and questioned. He repeated the story of his criminal career, telling the Justice that his favorite companions had been "Nigger Joe," "Donkey," "Dago Apple," and that he was known in the gang as "Kiddie Cohen."

He promised to leave his old companions behind when his father moved to a new neighborhood and give him no further cause for complaint. On these conditions Justice Mayer allowed him to go on parole.

The boy is a bright-looking youth with black hair and a keen eye. He hasn't the look of a criminal, but he stood the fire of Justice Mayer's questioning without flinching.

It was last Tuesday that he was arraigned in the court on a charge of stealing the pocketbook of Ida Klapper in Grand street. He pleaded guilty to the charge and astonished the Court by showing how easy it is for an adroit boy to pick a woman's pocket or loot a woman's chateleine bag.

A woman in the court-room allowed him to demonstrate on her, and so quickly and quietly did he strip everything from the bag that his movements hardly caught the eyes of the Judge.

### Boy's Remarkable Story.

When questioned to-day by an Evening World reporter as to his life as a pickpocket, the strange young criminal, with his big brown eyes and pink and white complexion, told a remarkable story.

"I don't belong to no gang," he protested. "I just know a lot of fellows who make all kinds of coin grabbing for pocket-books."

"Why, it's dead easy. I never had to be showed but once. One of us fellows walks in front of the lady, while the other kid grabs for her bag. He opens it quick and grabs whatever's on top. Then he hands it quick to the third fellow, who backs of him, and walks along as if nothing had happened. The fellow with the dough runs, for no one knows he's in the bunch. Then we all meet and the dough is divided."

"We don't try pocket-books as much as the kind of bags women carry in their hands or hanging to their belts. They're easy. You see, in a crowd, when one fellow jumps up close against a woman it's easy for his pal to open her bag."

Sometimes the fellow will open the bag and walk quick, while his partner will grab the stuff if he sees the woman isn't looking.

"Sometimes we get as many as seven pocket-books a day, but we can get more if we work hard."

Meyer denies that there is any school for thieving on the East Side. He says "the boys" put a fellow next.

### Initiated as a Thief.

"Nigger Joe," "Rusty" and "Whitey" are three of Meyer's pals. "Whitey" and "Eppie" and "Donkey" are credited with initiating him into the arts of thieving.

"I never would have been caught," said Meyer, sadly. "If I hadn't stumbled and fell, you see four of us started out, and when we spotted the woman we wanted one of the fellows got in front of her so she wouldn't see what was up. Then another got his hand under her apron and flipped the pocketbook out. I was to catch it and pass it on to another boy. When I slipped and fell, the woman caught me and had me pulled."

Meyer illustrated his tactics with an ease and alacrity that made all the officials put their hands involuntarily in their pockets.

"Of course pocket-books are the easiest things to get, but it isn't hard to land watch, a ring or a diamond. I've stolen a watch, a ring and a diamond. I've stolen a man in a crowd and pinched the chain. It's easy enough making off with the watch."

"Did I ever learn to steal handkerchiefs?" asked the interesting young pickpocket in disgust.

"Naw! What's the use when there's something worth while doing. I started out grabbing handkerchiefs when Effie told me I was a fool to waste my time, so I've been getting the real stuff ever since."

### Loyal to His Pals.

Meyer Cohen impresses one with being something of an anomaly. He has none of the criminal attributes and is a clean, healthy, well-dressed young fellow. Though he uses some unusual phrases he talks in fair English and with intelligence. Speaking of his introduction into the byways of crime he explained with a calm and matter of fact air:

"Well, you see I was acquainted with Eppie and Eppie put me next to my job."

Although apparently frank about speaking of his methods he will not give the last names of any of his companions.

"The fellows hang out around Rutgers place and Norfolk street, and I go with them to find them when there's anything doing."

Questioned closely as to his instructor, he said there was a man whose name he had forgotten who sometimes taught the boys how to steal.

"Of course I don't have to steal. I just do it for a good time," he explained. "I don't know what I would do if I had to, but I never go home with any of the coin. I always spend my share in the boys' room. I like ice-cream, I like candy and candy when there's plenty on."

"When we can't find easy women with bags we go for women with pocket-books in their aprons. You see a knife is dead easy to rip open a pocket with."

## Stern Brothers

Annual Sale of Household Linens

Very large assortments from the most reliable manufacturers of Ireland, Scotland, Germany and Belgium at Decided Reductions from Prevailing Prices

### Women's Footwear

MADE OF SATINS, SILKS & SUEDE, in evening shades, spangled, beaded & appliqued effects for the Opera and Ball, moderately priced

Carriage Boots, to correspond, at from \$3.50 to 5.00

Special To-morrow WOMEN'S BUTTON AND LACE BOOTS of Imported Patent Leather & Patna Kid, for Street and Dress Wear, AA to E, 2½ to 7, Extra value \$3.50

West Twenty-third Street.

### Sale of House Coats.



All at the 13th St. Store.

\$2.00, former price \$3.00

\$3.45, " " \$5&6.50

\$4.90, " " \$7.50

\$6.45, " " \$10.00

\$9.90, " " \$15.00

\$12.45, " " \$18&\$20

Three BROADWAY Stores.

Cor. 13th St. Cor. Canal St. Near Chambers.

## OLD POLICEMEN ARE STILL FIT.

Inspector Thompson and Several Captains Successfully Pass Scrutiny of Board of Police Surgeons.

### NOT YET SUPERANNUATED.

Turning a quick but graceful hand-spring, Inspector Walter Thompson, the "hero" of French balls, sounded into the examining-room of the Board of Police Surgeons to-day, had his heart tapped, his muscles felt and his lungs sounded, and then he was turned out with a certificate that he is still good for fifty or a hundred years of vigorous police duty.

Inspector Thompson, with Capt. Watson, Capt. Vreeland, Capt. Theron Copeland, William Schults and William Brown and a few sergeants, had been selected by Commissioner Partridge as requiring the attention of the police surgeons. They were among the oldest men on the force, and they had been rumors of their physical disability.

If anything angers Inspector Thompson it is the intimation that he is a physical wreck. He boasts that he can whip any man in New York, and he cheerfully turns hand-springs, keeps the back on a turning car, and various other "stunts" to prove that he has not lost the art of the awdust ring, which he cured before becoming policeman.

After an examination this morning the board announced that Thompson and all the others had passed the examination, and were good for many more years of police service.

Capt. Sculitz, who looks like the corner grocer in "Peck's Bad Boy," and who has a good copper all that time, although he is reputed, they would let me stick it out, I can get a lot of a bank account or some real estate."

"I haven't got a cent in the bank and have no real estate."

"Say, but I have a good joke on the surgeons," he added. "They discovered that I was wearing a double truss."

"How long have you been ruptured?" asked one of them.

"About thirty-two years," I said.

"The fact is I was ruptured when I went on the police force and the doctors thought that being as I had been a good cop all that time, although I was ruptured, they would let me stick it out. I can get a lot of a bank account or some real estate."

"When one came along he pushed forward with the other, and slipping, fell. Before he could get up a number of persons walked over him. One of his legs was badly sprained. After his bruises had been dressed at the J. Hood Wright Hospital he was sent home."